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AUTHOR Beach, Richard; Parks, Daryl; Thein, Amanda Haertling; Lensmire, Tim

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ABSTRACT

In responding to multicultural literature, high school students may have difficulty interpreting characters' practices because they are not familiar with the cultures portrayed in these texts. One reason for the challenges in teaching multicultural literature is that high school students have difficulty interpreting the larger cultural or institutional forces associated with race, class, and gender systems. A qualitative research study determined how high school students' discussion of and writing about multicultural literature served to challenge and foster changes in their discourses related to race, class, and gender. Research questions led to a methodological framework involving several types of research, including classroom observation, discourse analysis of student discussions, student interviews, analysis of student journal writing, teacher reflections, and ethnographic research of the school and community at large. Research was conducted at a large urban high school of 1600 students in a "working class" section of a large midwestern city. Each of the 14 students in the multicultural literature class was interviewed twice for 40-45 minutes over the semester. Over time, some students did change in their value stances related to discourses of race, class, and gender, particularly in recognizing how racism, class attitudes, and sexism are constructed through language and discourses in both texts and their everyday lives. This suggests the value of responding to multicultural literature as evoking competing discourse perspectives. Further research is called for. Appended are: interview questions, coding of school culture data, and codes for analysis of classroom/interview data. (Contains 83 references.) (NKA)

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By Richard Beach, Daryl Parks, Amanda Haertling Thein, and Tim Lensmire
University of Minnesota

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In responding to multicultural literature, high school students may have difficulty interpreting characters' practices because they are not familiar with the cultures portrayed in these texts (Goebel, 1995; Hemphill, 1999; Jordan & Purves, 1994). Given their reluctance to explore issues of racism and white privilege, they may also adopt a stance of resistance to multicultural literature (Jordan & Purves, 1994; Miller & Legge, 1999; Moller & Allen, 2000; Rogers & Soter, 1997). They may also resist attempts at what they perceive as a teacher's focus on challenging students' value stances related to issues of White privilege (Lewis, 2000).

One reason for these challenges in teaching multicultural literature is that high school students have difficulty interpreting the larger cultural or institutional forces associated with race, class, and gender systems (Vinz, et.al., 2000). In their responses to multicultural literature, many adopt an individualistic perspective, interpreting characters in terms of their individual agendas and motives as opposed to an institutional perspective in which they interpret characters as shaped by institutional forces (Beach, 1997a). Students who have had prior instruction associated with analysis of institutional forces, particularly in social studies, or who have participated in school diversity projects are more likely to adopt an institutional perspective (Beach, 1997a). While high school students may have difficulty understanding how individuals' identities and social practices are constituted by their participation in institutional systems or social worlds, they can vicariously gain experience of institutional forces through responding to literature portraying the effects of race, class, and gender systems on characters' lives.

An activity theory perspective on system or social worlds. One useful perspective for examining larger systems or social worlds portrayed in literature or shaping students' responses is activity theory of learning (Cole, 1996; Engestrom, Miettinen, & Punamaki, 1999; Smagorinsky, 2001). Activity theory of learning posits that learning occurs through participation in activity systems such as schools, classrooms, or communities. These systems are driven by the need to achieve larger objects or by motives related to produce some outcome (Engestrom, 1987). Russell (1997) defined an activity system as, "any ongoing, object-directed, historically conditioned, dialectically structured, tool-mediated human interaction. Some examples are a family, a religious organization, a school, a discipline, a research laboratory, and a profession" (p. 510). Analysis of activity involves three dimensions driving activity: objects, outcome, and motive (Leont'ev, 1978; Engestrom, 1987). For example, a possible outcome of participation in a political campaign is a candidate winning the campaign. Objects (promoting a candidate in the campaign as "winnable") are transformed into outcomes (winning the campaign) through tools (press releases, fund raisers, door knocks, speeches, mailings). The motive to obtain or fulfill the object evolves from a tension between a need state and the object, serving to energize the activity.

Activity systems are constituted by rules, roles/division of labor, and a sense of community, each of which is driven by the need to achieve certain objects (Engestrom, 1987). Agents in systems also employ certain tools—language, genres, narratives, images, discourses, or technology—designed to achieve certain objects. Agents define their identities through their

uses of these object-driven tools. For example, the speech-writer in a campaign employs language in speeches designed to win a campaign. Tools therefore *mediate* the relationships between speakers, writers, and readers and their objects or outcomes (Vygotsky, 1978).

Discourses as mediating tools. One important tool is the use of discourses—ways of knowing or thinking used to frame or constitute rhetorical, ideological, or political positions (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; Fairclough, 1995; 2001; 2003; Gee, 1996). Discourses of law, medicine, business, religion, science, literary criticism, therapy, or education entail certain ways of thinking and knowing that reflect ideological stances. Discourses, as reflected in language use and social practices, reflects power hierarchies in society. As Norman Fairclough (2003) notes:

> Language represents or constructs a social reality, it positions readers and listeners, it creates identities and relations, it creates a voice for the one who would speak or write, and, thus, there are clear implications for 'who can speak', 'what can be said', 'who and what is valued', ' who and what counts' in education.

Discourses also function as "identity tool-kits" (Gee, 1996). They mediate the relationships between objects/outcomes driving systems such as schools, communities, or peer-groups and participants' identities or value stances. By double-voicing" others' discourses as they move through different systems or communities of practice, people define their allegiances to different systems or communities of practice (Knoeller, 1998; Vadeboncoeur & Portes, 2002). For example, in a school system, being a "good student" is defined by discourses of middle-class "achievement" that links the student identity with achieving success in school based on the outcome of high grades or test scores. This discourse of "achievement" is evident in the notion of "high-achieving" students, as contrasted with "struggling" students who may "lack motivation" or are "underachieving." Similarly, in a sports or athletic activity system, a discourse of "competition" constitutes the identities of athletes associated with achieving the object of displaying physical competence in order to win games.

Discourses are also reflected in narrative scripts or scenarios having to do with act, belief, plan, goal relationships (Gee, 1996; Schank, R., & Berman, 2002). For example, in a discourse of "competition," a White student may object to an affirmative action program in which students of color are perceived to have an "unfair" advantage in college admissions and scholarship support. This White student's thinking is framed around a narrative scenario in which the goal is to obtain admission to college and the plan is to provide evidence of competitive ability under the belief that candidates are "playing on an equal playing field." When the expectation of that plan is frustrated by not achieving the goal, this student then argues that affirmation action programs are "unfair," evoking a discourse of individual "competition."

These goal-driven narratives, however, often are not perceived as linked to larger object-driven systems, largely because people are often not consciously aware of the fact that they are operating in a system. While the White student may argue that her goal of achieving admission to college was denied because of an affirmation action system, she may not recognize the larger historical or cultural forces operating in the system of White privilege that favored White candidates over candidates of color. As proponents of affirmative action argue, her reasoning does not take into account the larger system of White privilege associated with preferences and connections associated with the admissions process (Bonilla-Silva, 2001).

These narrative scripts or scenarios also serve to define identities (Phillion, 2002; Rhymes, 2001; Wortham, 2001). The White students, for example, those students who are plaintiffs in the University of Michigan affirmation action court case, construct their identity around the notion of being "highly qualified applicants" whose admission denials to the

University were "unfair." College star athletes may construct their identities around the narrative of "train hard" (act/plan) in order to achieve the goal of winning a game or match. At the same time, they may not consciously focus on the larger sports/entertainment system—whose object is to make money for television or the college.

Multicultural literature frequently portrays the system of institutional racism in which one racial group (often Whites) is driven by the object of maintaining power and control over other racial groups. The one dominant group employs discourses and narratives to maintain their power and control. In *Their Eyes Are Watching God*, *The Bluest Eye*, and August Wilson's, *Fences*, Whites control African Americans in the segregation system operating in Florida, a system justified through a discourse of racism. The African-American males have power over the African-American females, a system justified through a discourse of masculinity, but their anger, rage, and acts of violence reflect their own victimization and humiliation within the larger racist system.

However, in focusing on and interpreting the particular narrative events in multicultural literature, students may have difficulty seeing the forest for the trees—analyzing the larger systems constituting the meaning of these narrative events (Beach, 2000). For example, they may interpret African-American males' acts of violence as the need to dominate, but not perceive that need as a reflection of their lack of agency within the larger White racist system. Students may have difficulty inferring these larger systems because they continue to apply discourses of individualism. Based on an analysis of a college class, Easton and Lutzenberger (1999) identify a three-step process associated with applying this model: identification of one's own gender, class, or race identity; identification of the "other" character; articulation of a synthesis between one's own identity and the identity of the "other," leading to further understanding and tolerance (p. 276), but without any critique of larger institutional forces. For example, in discussing *The House on Mango Street*, the White students in their study believed that the characters could escape their oppressed world because "if one tried hard enough, freedom from economic, gender, and racial discrimination could generally be gained as an individual enterprise" (p. 274), the application of a discourse of individual achievement.

The Influence of Discourses of Race, Class, and Gender on Literary Response

In responding to multicultural literature, readers draw on discourses of race, class, and gender to interpret characters' social practices (Beach, 1997b). To do so, they draw on discourses of race, class, and gender acquired from the larger school culture and community (Eckert, 1989; Perry, 2002; Wason-Ellam, 1997). As they "double-voice" (Bakhtin, 1981) different discourses of race, class, and gender derived from texts, they experiment with adopting alternative, even contradictory ideological stances related to race, class, and gender. This may lead them to interrogate their orientations, alignments, and "dispositions" (Bourdieu, 1991) as constituted by peer, school, and community worlds (Fecho, 1998; Moller, 2002; Vinz et al., 2000).

Discourses of race. In a move that is consistent with critical literacy theories, Bonilla-Silva (2001) proposes an alternative conception of racism as "racialized social systems" that function to place people in hierarchical social categories and then assign meanings to groups based on economic or political power in ways that serve to maintain and justify these hierarchies, particularly in terms of discourses of whiteness (Cuomo & Hall, 1999; Delgado & Stefanic, 1997; Roediger, 2002; Fine, Weis, Powell, & Wong, 1997). For example, psychological discourses of race that focus on individuals only as "racist"/"prejudiced" presupposes that racism

is an "individual" problem. Contemporary "race-talk" discourses are often disassociated from racism as a past, historical phenomenon. For example, White students may adopt a discourse of "color-blind racism" to avoid being labeled as "racist," as evident in statements such as "Everyone is equal, but...." or "I am not prejudice, but...", in arguments such as "I didn't own slaves, so I'm not a racist," or in denials of structural nature of discrimination as reflected in critiques of affirmative action programs (Blum, 2002; Wiegman, 1999), a discourse fails to examine the forces of institutional racism (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001).

The power of prevailing discourses of Whiteness is reflected in an ethnographic study by Pamela Perry (2001) of white students' perceptions of their own identities and white culture from two different California high school schools: Valley Groves High School (VG), a largely white, suburban school, and Clavey High School (C), a highly diverse school with African-Americans as the majority group. In these two schools, White students had totally different perceptions of their own cultural identities. VG students, who had little exposure to racial differences, adopted a race-neutral perspective, constructing White, Euro-American culture as the norm. Students of color at VG "rarely acted culturally different from the white students" (p. 122). Nor did they challenge the White students, so any potential challenge was neutralized. The White students imposed their identities onto the students of color, so that their own sense of Whiteness was therefore an "empty cultural category" that only served to define an "us/them" or "White/majority" vs. "ethic/minority" distinction. In contrast, at C, race was the "principle of social organization." White students at C had a clear sense of their White identity as "White." At C, racism was defined in terms of "history and consequences of white racial oppressions and inequality that white students well understood" (p. 65). Another school ethnography of a diverse Toronto high school (Yon, 2000) finds that Whiteness was also an unacknowledged norm, resulting in the fact that students believed that they are now disadvantaged and excluded because other racial groups receive special attention. As a result, they "simultaneously resist, accommodate, and become ambivalent toward the discourses of multiculturalism, antiracism, and inclusivity all at the same time" (p. 30).

White students may adopt a value stance of White privilege operating in the school or community, particularly when challenged by alternative discourses of race (Blake, 1998; Fecho, 1998; Kumashiro, 2002; Smith & Strickland, 2001). Some of this backlash stems from White students' assumption that their perspective is the presumed community norm (Keating, 1995; Trainor, 2002), an assumption which can be unwittingly fostered by White teachers (Chapman, 2003; Lewis, Ketter & Fabos, 2001; Ketter & Lewis, 2001)). White students may assume that the norm of Whiteness operates through a discourse of ordered academic analysis set against what may be perceived of as unwarranted expressions of subjective perceptions that do not belong in the classroom. As Barnett (2000) notes, "discourses of 'whiteness' establish themselves as the norm through their reliance on particularly forms of 'rationality'...a term that highlights another attribute often credited to 'whiteness,' it's dependency on rules, order, and formal institutional structures" (p. 16), structures that may parallel discourses of order and control operating in the school.

Discourses of class. Discourses of race intersect with various discourses of class, further complicating the picture (Roediger, 2002). Understanding discourses of class requires analysis of the ways in which class functions to define agency and privilege (Gibson-Graham, Resnick, & Wolfe, 2000). Understanding how participants gain or lack agency and privilege requires an understanding of the subjective experiences of both anger, resignation, and resentment as well as pleasure, pride, and satisfaction.

Emphasizing the role of the subjective suggests the value of surfacing narratives associated with these discourses (Fecho, 1998; Rhymes, 2001; Wortham, 2001), particularly in terms of working-class students' responses to literature that reflect discourses of class (Hemphill, 1999; Hull & Rose, 1990; Pace, 2003). A comparison of working-class versus upper-middle-class adolescent females' language use in interviews about their lives (Gee, Allen & Clinton, 2001) found that working-class adolescents employed language to construct identities grounded in the everyday world of social interaction and relationships. In contrast, the upper-middle-class females used language in ways that aligned themselves with institutional norms and trajectories associated with achievement.

Renny Christopher (1999) attributes the success of her college course on working-class literature to sharing of stories that served to bolster the working-class students' sense of agency in an academic context and critical analysis of class discourses. At the same time, Christopher notes a basic tension facing working class students in elite academic contexts in which traditional notions of "rationality" prevail in the classroom.

Discourses of gender. Gender discourses constitute notions of identity construction through responses to popular culture texts (Christian-Smith, 1993; Currie, 1999; Finders, 1997; Nixon, 1996; McRobbie, 2000; Radway, 2002). For example, pre-adolescent females constructed their responses to a romance novel around categories of "good" versus "bad" girl defined within the historical context of patriarchic discourse (Enciso, 1998). The females in this study collectively created their own subject position for dealing with the contradictions or double-binds associated with being both good and bad girls in school. In her study of female adolescents' responses to the popular television program, *Beverly Hills, 90210*, McGinley (1997) found that the females rarely challenged the program's predominate narrative of employing a range of practices associated with being attractive to males. Analysis of male response to male-oriented magazine ads and computer games demonstrates the power of images to construct meanings for masculine gender practices (Nixon, 1996; Newkirk, 2002). It is also the case that discourses of gender intersect with discourses of race in shaping students' identities. White Clavey High School female students in Perry's (2002) study often were stigmatized by being white and female; they often resorted to negative stereotypes of students of color, adopting more "conflictive, stereotypical, and defensive" stances.

The Role of the Literature Teacher in Interrogating Discourses

The literature teacher assumes an important role in creating contexts in which students interrogate these various discourses (Chapman, 2003; Dressel, 2003; Knoeller, 1998; Pace, 2003; Willis, 1998). In classroom discussions, teachers and students position themselves through discourses as certain kinds of persons, what Staton Wortham (2001) defines as "interactional positioning." These "orienting discourses" (Rex, 2002) reflect certain stances or dispositions consistent with a class-based "habitus" constituting practices in a classroom (Bourdieu, 1977). Lesley Rex (2002) describes the "habitus" of one college-prep English class:

> The "general college prep" students brought their notions of what it means to "do English" and to be a successful English student...these reflected the values, beliefs and dispositions of their families and primary social groups and social classes as well as their schooling institutions. Their habitus functioned as sets of principles for them to generate and regulate what they considered "regular" social-academic practices within their newly formed class.

Students import different discourses from their school, family, community, and peer-group worlds into classroom discussions, some of which reflect majority, status-quo perspectives and some of which reflect minority perspectives challenging the status quo (Beach & Myers, 2001). In responding to literature, students often reject portrayals of unconventional character practices as inconsistent with what they perceive to be the majority school or community norms, thus silencing expression of alternative, minority perspectives (Pace, 2003). Given tensions between these competing stances and discourses operating in a discussion, teachers attempt to mediate these tensions by supporting expression of alternative, minority perspectives in ways that serve to challenge status-quo perspectives (Dressel, 2003; Phillion, 2002; Vinz, et.al., 2000). By inviting expression of alternative voices that challenge status quo discourses, teachers create a dialogic context that leads to further interrogation of the institutions constituting those discourses (Edelsky, Smith, & Wolfe, 2002; Lewis, 2000; Samura, 1996; 2001; Christoph & Nystrand, 2001). When challenged by an alternative discourse or value stance, students may then reflect on the limitations of their own discourse or value stance, for example, a discourse of White privilege. However, mediating competing discourses, particularly essentialized notions of White students, can be challenging for teachers. As Jennifer Trainor (2002) notes:

> We are asked, on the one hand, to respect, even love, students...and we must, on the other, organize our teaching around attempts to change students. Caught between these two mandates, we struggle to represent whiteness and white students as perpetrators of injustice who must be taught to disavow whiteness and as legitimate social actors on whom we must risk "an act of love." I want to suggest that once we confront this contradiction and the ways it delimits how we see mainstream students, it becomes possible to represent and understand encounters with resistant students in less politicized and essentialized terms. (p. 634).

Trainor argues for the need to examine the emotional appeal of a White privilege discourse, an appeal related to both the "rational and the irrational, the conscious and the unconscious, thought and feeling" (p. 637). She cites a study of white college students (Gallagher, 1995) that demonstrates the emotional appeal of the "whites as victim" theme as a rallying cry for group identification with others who share this discourse. Given the potential for conservatives to exploit white anger, she argues for the need to avoid the use of "rhetorical frames that demonize whiteness and white students"(p. 647) and to directly challenge discourses of whiteness through recognition of the role of subjectivity in shaping discourses.

All of this suggests the need to examine how students' discourses acquired in different social worlds shape their responses to multicultural literature. It also suggests the need to examine how competing discourses evoked by discussions of multicultural literature serve to challenge students' status-quo discourses, as well as how teachers mediate tensions between these competing discourses in the classroom. Underlying this analysis is a critical literacy focus on issues of access and diversity related to dominating languages and discourses, and ways of challenging domination. As Hilary Janks (2002) notes, "Domination without difference and diversity loses the ruptures that produce contestation and change" (p. 1).

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to determine how high school students' discussion of and writing about multicultural literature served to challenge and foster changes in their discourses related to race, class, and gender.

Research Questions

The research in this study was guided by the following questions:
1. How does multicultural literature evoke different discourses associated with participation in different systems or social worlds?
2. How do students formulate and revise discourses in reaction to peers' challenges and interrogations in discussions of multicultural literature?
3. What is the teachers' role in not only challenging students, but also mediating tensions between competing discourses in discussions of multicultural literature?

These questions led to a methodological framework involving several types of research, including observational research in the classroom, discourse analysis of student discussions, student interviews, analysis of student journal writing, teacher reflections and ethnographic research of the school and community at large.

Choice of and access to site. Research for this study was conducted at Thompson High School, a diverse, urban high school of 1,600 students in a "working class" section of a large, Midwestern city. This school was chosen for its diversity (the student body is 42 percent White, 30 percent Asian, 17 percent African, 10 percent Hispanic and one percent Native American) and because the recent demographic shifts in the school and the community created a unique site for studying racial and social class tensions (see chapter 5 for more on the school culture). Additionally this site was chosen because one of the researchers (Daryl Parks) was a teacher at Thompson, which assisted us in gaining access to both the school and his classroom.

Description of classroom and students. The initial six months of the study were conducted primarily in Daryl Parks' multicultural literature class. Parks is a white male in his seventh year of teaching. In this class, students read and discussed a variety of texts including, *The House on Mango Street, Bless me Ultima, Kindred, Their Eyes Were Watching God, Obason, Smoke Signals* (film), *Woman Warrior, Love Medicine, Bastard Out of Carolina*, and *Yellow Raft in Blue Water*. This class is part of a college in the schools program through which 11th and 12th grade students receive college credit for taking this course while still in high school. The 14 participant students consisted of eight females and six males: eight white, three Asian-American, one Hispanic, and one student of African descent.

Research in the classroom. Observations were conducted and field notes were written during approximately three class sessions per week beginning at the start of the school year. Additionally, class discussions and small group discussions of the literature read in the class were audio-taped and transcribed by the researchers. In total, over 30 discussion sessions were taped and transcribed. Following each observed class session the researcher observing the class (Thein) and the teacher (Parks) spent approximately one hour reflecting on what each observed in the class that day. These reflection sessions were also audio-taped and transcribed by the researchers. Additionally, Parks kept a reflective journal of his teaching. Finally, students wrote journal entries three--four times per week in responses to literature, classroom discussions, and Parks's prompts. These journals were read and in some cases transcribed, becoming part of the data set.

Student interviews and focus groups. Each of the 14 students in the class was interviewed twice for 40 to 45 minutes over the course of the semester by Thein. (See Appendix A for interview questions). Each interview was audio-taped and transcribed. In addition to these individual interviews, students participated in focus group interviews in groups consisted of four or five students at the culmination of the semester.

Follow-up research. Following the initial six-month phase of research, a second semester of research was conducted focusing on in-depth interviews with students who were chosen as case-

studies, as well as ethnographic research on the school culture as a whole. This research examined the traditions constituting the school culture in terms of their influence on student social group construction, individual identity construction, and the classroom discourses evident in the classroom analyses. Field observations were conducted in a variety of classrooms, several lunch periods, at athletic events, and student assemblies. A life-long resident of the neighborhood, teachers in the building, the president of the school alumni association, and a building administrator were also interviewed. School yearbooks chronicling the past seventy years of the school's history were analyzed to consider shifts in demographics and extracurricular activities, as well. The data was coded using QSR NVIVO (see Appendix B for codes).

Coding. Codes were developed by the four researchers through a process of multiple readings of the data set and negotiating ways of categorizing the data. In developing codes the researchers wrote and continually revised coding categories until all four researchers were consistently reliable in their codings and descriptions. The codes were organized around 1) participant; 2) texts; 3) teacher techniques; 4) student discussion/positioning strategies; 5) voicing and adopting discourses of gender, class, race, sports/athletics, school/education/socialization, historical/cultural analysis in general, psychological, religious/spiritual; 6) contextualizing and constructing text worlds in terms of norms, conventions, beliefs, values in the text; and 7) categorizing/defines perceptions of self, others, and characters. Transcripts of selected large and small group discussions, all interviews, and focus groups were coded using QSR NVIVO.

RESULTS

The Community and School Culture

Understanding students' responses in the classroom requires an understanding of the larger school and community culture shaping their identities and stances. Students' discourses reflect their participation in the larger community and school cultures.

The neighborhood surrounding Thompson High School has long been the home of European immigrant populations. While the neighborhood has enjoyed groups from all parts of the globe, its primary background is tri-cultural with large communities of Italian, Scandinavian, and Polish immigrants. While many of those communities have dispersed, long-time, family-owned Italian restaurants and aging Scandinavian and Polish Community Centers still attract an elderly weekend audience to polka nights or holiday gatherings. The vast majority of the neighborhood's long-time residents are connected with these populations and histories.

In addition to the affordable housing of the community, three different industries: a brewery, an iron works, and a chemical/mining factory drew the unskilled laborers to the neighborhood. As recently as the 1960s, neighborhood residents could complete high school and immediately find a "good" job. As one 1950's graduate of Thompson said of life after graduation in those days,

> You just walked out the front door [of the school], walked around back and across the tracks and down the street and you could get a job right off the bat; you graduate on Thursday, and Friday morning you could be working at a job. And they were well paying jobs within a few years, many of the kids got married and had families, could support a house and a car.

As with the rest of the country, the market for unskilled labor rapidly diminished in the past 30 years. Unemployment and lay-offs soared. Real estate values declined. Families in the larger homes began to subdivide and rent to multiple families of new immigrants.

The community then experienced a marked demographic shift with the immigration of African American, Hispanic, and Vietnamese populations, as well as a large influx of Hmong refugees from the mountains of Laos. In addition, changes in the district's enrollment policy allowed students from other neighborhoods to attend Thompson. These factors would be the impetus of change in the neighborhood's culture.

Thompson's current relationship with the surrounding community has become more ambiguous. With an increasingly diverse population, the school recognizes the need to adopt a more inclusive stance as a diverse cultural community. At the same time, while the school's hockey and football teams, made up largely White athletes, garner strong community support, sports populated primarily by students of color, such as basketball and soccer receive little to no community attention. The shift to a more inclusive stance creates strains in terms of alumni support, as evident in comments by the head of the alumni association. He explains the changes in his dealings with long-time supporters within the community.

> That is the thing. They [past graduates] think the neighborhood's went down. Their idea of the neighborhood's went down is they drive through once in a while and see some black guys or some Hmong kids walking down the street. Well, that is different than actually knowing the Hmong kids, ya know. Like here at Thompson, I get to know most of them, and they're no different from anybody else's kids.

Despite these changes in the student population, however, it is clear that the white students at Thompson still remain systemically central in the culture of the school, reflecting the perpetuation of a status-quo system mediated by a discourse of White privilege reflected in various traditions. The object of this system is to perpetuate and celebrate a sense of a fading past inconsistent with the realities of a diverse cultural population.

This tradition was evident in the practices observed in an annual "Winter-Fest" coronation ceremony in 2002. "Winter-Fest" is a week in February when students prepare for the winter dance. It includes festivities throughout the week, dress-up days and a ceremony at which the royalty for the dance are crowned. This ceremony is seeped in school tradition and is carefully managed by teachers and administrator. Students invite their family members who are able to site in chairs on the floor of the gym for the festivities. "Thrones" are placed upon the stage and elaborate capes and crowns are awarded to the king and queen. As candidate names are called, they stroll in their tuxedoes down the red carpet beneath the outstretched swords of the JROTC members in full uniform.

With the families of the school's most popular students in attendance, great effort is made to control every aspect of the event. Teachers are assigned locations in the crowd in order to ensure no outbursts of emotion or ridicule from the students in attendance. Most notably, many students are not present at the event; the school charges a fee for students to attend the ceremony. Those students who do not purchase the official button cannot attend, but sit in a holding room watching popular videos or studying. Those who organize the event acknowledge that this is an effective way of keeping out those students who will disrupt the formal, traditional affair.

The first year of this study, there was only one attempted disruption on the part of small group of African-American students. Given the formality of the affair, students are discouraged from displaying emotional or disruptive responses except at ordained times. Students who cheer for their candidates or distract attention from the coronation receive scowls and reprimands from

the teachers in their areas. These students chose to yell unclear comments at unapproved times during the ceremony; they were quickly silenced by the authorities nearby.

A possible explanation in studying these incidents is that because the school wants to maintain traditions and a sense of cohesiveness and control within the student body, they choose to exclude those students who may not uphold these values. The African-American students who attended the ceremony but celebrated in a manner that was "inappropriate" are a perfect example of students operating with values that are not upheld by the school. One white, female senior indicated that the "loud" behavior of such African-American students is unacceptable. She further cited such behavior as a reason many of the white students avoid attending basketball games. Consistently, the White students and administrators' value stances reflect a discourse of "control" constituted by the need for rules, order, and "rationality" (Barnett, 2000).

However, even the Winter-Fest" event was undergoing change in ways that challenge the status quo system. At the 2003 Winter-fest ceremony, there was a striking difference in the representation of students of color among those nominated and among those who were crowned royalty. This year, more than half of the nominees were students of color, as were all of the winners. Teachers from the school suggest that the reason for this is that students tend to vote along racial lines. A single candidate of a particular racial group is likely to win if he or she were the only student from that racial group nominated, but two students nominated from another racial group would split that group's vote. This suggests that while the structure of the ceremony continues to be replicated, those actually honored are beginning to signify something different. While the traditional significance of being crowned royalty might have meant that one is the most popular student in one's class, a new significance of winning might mean that one's racial group has the most solidarity or that it is gaining status and power in the school.

Another element of the school's traditions revolves around sports. The sports system's larger object is to foster a sense of school spirit associated with physical display of competence. This system is mediated by a discourse of competition and self-achievement that links the object of fostering school spirit with the identity of school athlete or jock. One student noted that the principal "likes sports players a lot cause she thinks they're like role models throughout the school." As Penelope Eckert (1989) noted about the high school "jock" culture

> Varsity athletes are seen as serving the interests of the school and the community, representing the school in its most visible arena, and symbolizing all that is thought to be healthy and vigorous in American culture...The high school Jock embodies an attitude – an acceptance of the school and its institutions as an all-encompassing social context, and an unflagging enthusiasm and energy for working within those institutions. An individual who never plays sports, but who participates enthusiastically in activities associated with student government, unquestioningly may be referred to by all in the school as a Jock." (p 3)

Interviews with school athletes reflected their adherence to this discourse of competitive self-achievement associated with the strong athletic tradition at Thompson. Athletes evoke narratives of hard work and training consistent with a discourse of competition. Being involved with sports serves as an extrinsic means for students to attain self-discipline. In order to participate in sports, students must maintain control of themselves both in school and outside of school. When one participant wrote an article for the school newspaper regarding athletes' use of alcohol, she was criticized by the school's athletic director for undermining the positive image of athletes in the school. Students involved in athletics at Thompson are not only supported on the field, but also in the positions of leadership at school. This intense support of athletes by the

administration may be tied to the fact that these students exercise the physical self-control or self-discipline that is so valued by the school as a whole.

Racial segregation in the school. Another aspect of the school culture is the racial segregation within the school. Observations of the cafeteria during lunch periods offer further examples of social and racial stratification among students at Thompson (Tatum, 2003). With very few exceptions, students clearly organize themselves into racial groups. Basketball games are attended by a student population that are almost entirely African-American, despite the fact that the varsity team consists of ten African-American students, four white students and one Latino student. The hockey team consists of overwhelmingly White students; attendance at hockey games consists primarily of Whites. While basketball games are primarily attended by African-American students, there is still a sense that they are managed by white students since these students sell the tickets at the game, run the concession stand, and play in the band during the game.

No simple answer exists as to how these patterns of segregation arose at this school. While Thompson may be a diverse school, the majority of students rarely interact across racial lines. So while White students at Thompson may see themselves as different from White students in suburban schools because of their physical proximity to students of color, they may actually have limited experience in dealing with issues of race.

The students at Thompson are different from those in at Clavey high in the previously described study (Perry, 2002). The White students at Thompson don't see themselves just as White and living in an invisible culture, but rather as "urban." They often accuse suburban white students and relatives who live in suburban areas of ignorance and racist attitudes towards their urban high school setting. They prefer to perceive themselves, regardless of their race, as operating in a diverse "urban" school that differs from what they perceive to be all-white, middle-class suburban worlds. At the same time, some of the White students, as in Yon's (2000) study of a Toronto high school culture, argue that they themselves can be are now disadvantaged given their beliefs that racial groups receive special attention through affirmative-action programs.

The Classroom Culture

The discourses of race, class, and gender as well as the cultural models of individual achievement/competition constituting the school culture were challenged by the stances valued in the classroom culture of the course. Because the course was designed to offer college credit, the teacher, Parks attempted to create an alternative culture in the classroom that valued dialogic, intellectual exploration around issues of race and class that were rarely addressed in the larger school culture. This created tensions for some students in the course between their allegiances to the course versus their allegiance to roles they adopt in the school culture. Having a diverse classroom setting did serve to challenge white students' value stances within classroom discussions, challenges that served to foster some self-interrogation (Perry, 2002).

At the same time, students maintained some of their allegiances to the discourses operating in the larger school and community cultures, creating tensions between the classroom and the school/community worlds. Some of the students of color were reluctant to actively participate in discussions, reluctance that reflected the fact that while students of color constitute the majority in the school, they are rarely acknowledged or listened to by those students with social power in the school, particularly the White male athletes in the course. These students, whose athletic prowess affords them high status in the school culture, often evoked discourses of

"control"/ "self-discipline" in criticizing characters of color in the novels. This allegiance was reflected in their acts of male bonding in discussions in which they resisted challenges from female students and also voiced male characters' voicing of male control/domination. For example, in discussing *Love Medicine*, one White male student showed disdain for the action of the Native American characters in the novel, referring to them as "drunk, incest people" who lacked control over their lives. These males also adopted discourses of Whiteness as reflected in "new race talk" (Bonilla-Silva (2001) constituting their identities as white males. For example, in discussing the system of slavery in *Kindred*, one White male student argued that the racism associated with slavery was not operating in contemporary culture because slavery was a past historical event.

Challenges to these male students' White privilege evoked a backlash based on the assumed power norms operating in the mainstream school culture. One female student who was considered an outcast within the larger school culture frequently challenged these male discourses, while another female student who adopted more traditional female role in the school did not challenge the male discourses

In challenging these discourses, over time, other students began to recognize that this backlash reflected these male students' allegiances to the larger school culture, leading them to interrogate the school culture itself as problematic. This suggests that open disagreement between alternative value stances and voices fostered within a classroom culture may be undermined by the intrusion of allegiances to the larger school culture (Pace, 2003).

The role of the teacher. In this class, Parks assumed a key role in helping students negotiate the contradictions between their allegiances to different lived-worlds (Edelsky, Smith, & Wolfe, 2002; Samura, 2001). Parks mediated different class worlds of his students and these academic worlds by describing how he has learned to negotiate differences between his working-class background experience and other worlds. Consistent with the valued role of narratives for working-class students (Gee, Allen, Clinton, 2001; Hemphill, 1999), Parks shared childhood narratives of financial destitution, family members' run-ins with the law, and the prevalent drug culture of his factory-employed neighborhood. He frequently described himself as a statistical outlier who began college at age twenty-five and overcame constraints that tied him to the expected neighborhood experience. In discussing his own working-class background, Parks gains identification with his own students, who perceive him as a "co-author of students' lives" (Rymes, 2002, p. 168)—someone who is able to bridge competing worlds. As one student noted:

> If you walked into a room and there is a rich guy and a poor guy, who are you most likely to sit next to? I think you are gonna lean more toward the guy who has something in common with you. I think that is why people get along with you, Mr. Parks, cuz we're peers and so are you.

At the same time, he shared anecdotal experiences of White privilege operating in the larger high school culture and community, modeling of self-critique for the male athletes. As he gained the respect of his students as "one of them," he also encouraged them to examine the limitation of their larger school status related to their white privilege associated with a sports system.

Parks was also aware of the need to socialize students into a world of college literature study. In his mentor role, Parks served at a cultural broker or guide to introduce students into a larger community of readers who enjoy or participate in interpreting literature, as well as the expectations for what constitutes college level work.

To be effective in this role, he needed to do more than simply formulate the norms and expectations of college work because such abstractions would mean little to students with little experience with college level work. He therefore demonstrated how particular interpretive practices are valued within not only his own classroom, but also other larger communities outside of the classroom. This involves what Edelsky, Smith, and Wolfe (2001) describe as "tourguiding" in which the he made explicit the fact that a certain interpretative practices are valued by their classroom community. In modeling these responses, he was aware of the need to do so within the students' zone of proximal development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978; Lee, 1993). This included modeling adoption of a point-driven stance (Hunt & Vipond, 1992) associated with inferring symbolic or thematic meanings of characters' actions (Rabinowitz, 1997). In teaching *Love Medicine*, he shared his own responses to the introductory chapter, highlighting the concept of a recurring thematic meaning:

> I also wanted them to consider the idea that the first chapter was actually full of meaning for the rest of the novel, but it didn't make sense at the time. I also wanted them to latch onto a specific recurring theme not only with June but the idea of water and the spiritual inhabitation of beings in the novel. The mysticism.

He engaged in this modeling in an inductive manner, working off of the students' difficulties interpreting symbolic meanings. In discussing the novel, the students were having difficulty understanding the symbolic meaning of the last chapter's title, "The Bridge:"

> KV: The title of the last chapter is "The Bridge" but it only mentions a bridge in there When they are talking about Henry who says "He thought of diving off the river bank, a bridge." I didn't understand what that was supposed to mean or the significance. Was he trying to commit suicide?
>
> KL: Talks about a bridge of 141, too.
>
> KV: yeah, that's the one.
>
> CM: Albertine talks about it too.

Parks then introduces a quote:

> DP: I got a quote of page 6. "The snow fell deeper that Easter than it had in 40 years, but June walked over it like water and came home."
>
> IA: We, me and M brought this quotation up and he said that it had something to do with like after death or something. Like when "June came home" it was her spirit was still alive even though she was dead—it was still alive. Do you understand? Mike brought is up, cause like Native Americans do believe that your spirit lives in the trees, like Mr. Parks said, "animism" is it? And like in trees and rocks and the ground, June, her spirit is still alive.
>
> M: Like Mr. Parks said, in Native American religion, death is kind of a full circle, therefore,
>
> when she comes home, that means her body has died. "The pure and naked part of her" would be her soul.
>
> DP: I was saying that like when you think of what a bridge does, a bridge is a thing that carries you across water, and I was reminded of that quote where it says that "June crossed over the water," so, it is that bridge image again...quickly, from a bigger issue which is not to be explored now, but water in this novel...if I was to say "start naming off stuff that had to do with water" or "looked like water" or whatever. It would be like...well, let's try it...
>
> CM: Him drowning.

KL: She poured the hot water on her.
DP: poured the water...
Voice: "when she closed her eyes and saw the water"
DP:...saw the water.
PH: When Nectar goes swimming, he goes down to the bottom of the lake.
DP: he does...
Voice: "washing the floors it's like water..."
DP: like water
Voice: ...pebbles in the lake...
DP: ..pebbles in the lake...
Voice: plunge of the brave
DP: Okay, we did that without trying. We didn't even have to think hard. Obviously, the idea of water, bridge over water, going home over water...there is something there, what it is, I don't know. Keep looking for it.

In this sequence related to the question as to the meaning of "the bridge," Parks is modeling ways of noting the symbolic meaning of images in the novel. He cites a quote from the beginning of the novel related to the symbolic meaning of water and then elicits other examples of how water assumes a symbolic role in other parts of the novel. While he never explicitly answers the question as to the meaning of the bridge, he has engaged students in the process of inferring symbolic meanings.

Parks also modeled strategies for applying a "deconstructivist lens" to examine how language use reflects institutional power structures (Appleman, 2000). For example, in discussing the portrayal of Native American reservations in *Love Medicine*, one student noted that:

> We like kicked a culture off of its land, but in the history books its recorded as "settlement." That's what it was, "settlement." But then I ask the question, "how can you settle a place that is already settled?" How can you go into somebody's else's environment and start to build houses and then say that it's "settled?" When someone is already there, living there.

He also addressed students' difficulties in interpreting aspects of the novels that were confusing to students. For example, in discussing the characters in *Love Medicine*, Parks noted that the students were:

> confused by the time shifts in the narrative and the changing narrators. The last names of characters changing caused confusion. For example in 1930s the character had the maiden name, and then the character would reappear with a different name in the 50s with no mention of a wedding. This type of stuff caused a continuous uncertainty in nearly every student's mind. There was a lot of "Well, I thought that Marie was different..." kind of discussion. They just didn't have certainty on a lot of things.
>
> Given their difficulties in sorting out the character relationships in the novel, Parks shifted gears and

encouraged students to note evidence in the text that served to clarify the characters' blood relationships with each other. He also distributed a family tree showing the connecting lines between the characters.

Parks also fostered students' critical analysis of texts by initially describing or modeling a particular critical stance or what Love (2000) describes as a "shared reading position." During this initial phase, he modeled the process of making connections between lived-world

experiences and the texts. For example, he describes the thematic focus in *Bastard Out of Carolina* on the influence of prior generations on current generations:

> One theme that jumped out at me in this book was, how, you know, look at Annie's mom who is this bitter woman who says, "you don't trust men," and she just sits and chews tobacco and does her thing and then you take Annie who is rebelling against being like that and is determines to stick almost like LuLu, determine she was going to stick with this man and he was going to make her into something and just watching the younger cousins being just like the uncles and then just think of, you could write a sequel to this novel and it would pick up with Reese and all the cousins and I would see the novel being almost exactly the same with different names. And I could just see it going generation after generation and then I start thinking about my family or other families I know and I think oh that is just like it, when I start thinking about families I know.

Then, in what Love (2000) describes as the "Developing Response stage," he moved students away from the text to evaluate or judge the characters' actions, explore larger themes, or draw implications related to their own lives. To do so, he employed a "you think you know me, but you don't" role-play. In this role-play, students selected a character from a text and outlined what they knew about the character. The students then 'filled in the blanks' of the character's life in a role-play adoption of the character given what they know about human behavior. This encouraged students to revise some of their initial prototypical conceptions of characters based on discourses of race, class, and gender to adopt more complex perspectives.

Parks challenged the discourses underlying these prototypical conceptions by voicing "orienting discourses" (Rex, 2002) that contradicted the students' discourses constituting characters' identities. For example, one student, K, a White male, had initially perceived the Native American character, King, in *Love Medicine* as an abusive drunk who neglected his child. Parks provided some alternative discourses regarding Native Americans' economic and cultural plight, discourses that helped students move away from their individualized discourses to interpret Native Americans as shaped by larger systems. In his role-play presentation of King for the class, K. articulated a sense of the economic and cultural forces shaping Native Americans, declaring "you don't know where I've been and you call me a drunk." In doing so, he moved past that initial stereotyped interpretation to portray King as limited by larger economic and cultural forces that undermined any sense of hope for his future.

Parks also encouraged students to challenge each others' discourses, creating dialogic tensions between competing discourses in discussions. For example, in the following exchange, students are discussing the issue of the rape of the Black female main character, Dana, in *Kindred* who through time travel returns to the system of slavery and her subordination to the White master, Rufus. She discovers that her ancestor was a slave who was conceived of through Rufus's rape of her. KK's argument that the rape may have actually been an expression of love provoked strong responses from the other students.

> SM: I think he is wrong because when we first meet her she is a free woman and she was now in slavery.
>
> KK: Put yourself in Rufus's shoes though.
>
> MM. It doesn't matter, she's black, he's white, she doesn't have any power.
>
> KK: Try to put yourself in Rufus's position. Try to put yourself in his shoes and what He's gotta deal with. He's got his love for a woman who happened to be free, but at the same time he knows that since he loves her so much and since she ran off he want to try to help her cause he loves her. So even though he might have brought her back into

slavery, he kind of did her a favor even though she did happen to get the crap kicked out of her by a bunch of traders, but it would have been a lot worse had he let he get sold off to a different trader.

SM: I don't think he loves her. I think he's just obsessed with her, cause how can he say he loves her if she doesn't love him?

KK: You can love somebody and not have them love you back.

SM: It's not real love. It's like, to me, I just, he's just obsessed with her. He doesn't really care about her cause, like I think he just wants to use her as like for sex.

In this exchange, SM and MM are arguing the Rufus is exploiting the master/slave relationship for sex, while KK is arguing that Rufus actually cares about Dana. SM challenges KK's notion of a love relationship by arguing for the fact that slave master's, as part of the system, were simply exploiting slaves. This debate reflects a larger disparity between perceiving relationships as constituted by race and gender discourses of institutionalized power difference and a discourse of love based on personal relationships, a disparity that led some students to appreciate the power of institutional discourses, particularly from an historical perspective.

Critiquing discourses of race, class, and gender. Parks also continually focused on the ways in which language categories associated with race, class, and gender differences are cultural constructions serving to perpetuate social hierarchies (Bonilla-Silva, 2001). For example, during the course, the students prepared to attend an event at a local university that involved students from different, largely suburban, schools. The students were to meet together to listen to a speaker discuss multicultural literature and to then discuss the topic with students from the different schools.

Parks anticipated that because the students would be interacting with students from different race and class backgrounds, that issues of race and class differences might arise, particularly in terms of how some of the largely white, suburban students perceived his students as coming from a diverse, urban, working-class school. He sensed that his students would encounter some stereotypical comments from some of the suburban students, something that could serve as the basis for a discussion of conceptions of race and class differences associated with how they label suburban or rural people. Building on the previous "you think you know me, but you don't" role-play, prior to going on the field trip, he engaged them in the following project:

> We broke into our discussion circle and I did a combo of talking and student writing around the ideas of rural images and life, suburban images and life. They wrote about that, and then how they are perceived as urban students. I asked them to role-play and to talk from a place of the rural them or suburban them, which lent itself to interesting insights.

After completing their writing, the students described the perceptions of a prototypical rural student and a prototypical suburban student. They described the lives of the rural students as consisting of "boring" farm chores. Upon further discussion, the students came to realize that they were basing these stereotypes on incomplete information. Similarly, in describe the lives of suburban students, they frequently referred to class markers, particularly money, as a feature that distinguished themselves from their suburban counterparts. "The suburban me would drive to school in a car purchased by my dad the lawyer," noted one student. As they considered the upcoming gathering with students from different backgrounds, they noted that physical markers such as dress, hair, as well as speech, serves to differentiate themselves from suburban students.

This activity began to foster students' awareness of the culturally-constructed nature of identify categories—how the categories they apply to others and themselves shape their perceptions of others. When faced with dialogic challenges to these categories, they may either hold fast to their categories, or revise their categories in ways that account for complexities of cultural practices.

Parks also challenged students' propensity to interpret characters' practices as matters of personal morality, interpretations reflecting the school discourse of individual "control" and competition. This was most evident in debates over affirmation-action program. Many of the White students perceived affirmative action as an unfair "reverse discrimination" against Whites, noting that they need to pay far more tuition to attend a competitive college than do students of color. In responding to portrayals of slavery in *Kindred*, some students argued that because they did not participate in past instances of racism, they should not face reverse discrimination evident (for them) in affirmative-action programs, an expression of what Bonilla-Silva (2001) describes as "race-talk."

In challenging students' arguments related to affirmative action, Parks examined race and class inequities in terms of larger systems, as opposed to framing issues in terms of their own personal gains or losses. For example, one White student indicated that he was struggling with a journal prompt "what race/gender etc. would make your life easiest?" The student noted, "I have black people in my family. I don't want to say that whites are better." Parks responded, "that it's not who you think is better, but in this system, this country, whose is easier?" He consistently responded to students by distinguishing between individual experiences of students and the perceived norms of societal behavior.

Parks also noted contradictions in students' positions regarding affirmative action related to assumptions about a history of exclusion operating in higher education. For example, Parks created a hypothetical case of low-income families receiving more financial aid, a direct reference to the advantages afforded students in the course. He also supported those students who were resisting the shared, majority consensus emerging in the classroom, for example, that whites should not be held accountable for past historical events (Pace, 2003).

Rather than challenging students himself, he encouraged expression by other white students regarding the hegemonic control of the white system. As a result, some students began to shift their stances. One White student noted how she changed her view on affirmative action programs, which she initially resented, because she became increasingly aware of how race and culture serves to disadvantage some groups "because of their race and their culture and how they grew up and all of the things that they had to deal with that I wouldn't being white." Another student noted:

> I just thought just because you were a minority you could just get along in life a little easier when it comes to school and stuff like that. Get scholarships and all that other good stuff. And then when we got into it a lot of it kid of changed my whole aspect on it like how look at that now. The way earlier hurdles and that sort of thing and where you come from and your family situation. So that changed me a lot.

Similarly, in discussing discourses of gender in *Bastard Out of Carolina*, Parks focused on how larger systems or cultures define gender roles. For example, in discussing gender role expectations, one student noted that the "guy who sleeps around is cool, and the girl who does is a slut." This led Parks to ask the males in the class if the culture created expectations for them to be sexually active. While some students noted that they received a lot of cultural messages to be

sexually active as "a male," other institutional forces, such as the family, discouraged such practices.

Challenges From Students Of Color In The Class

While the teacher experienced some measure of success in mediating White students' resistance to interrogating racism and sexism, it was not without complexity. When Parks focused on critiquing White students' discourses of race, students of color noted that they were marginalized in discussions. Students of color were fearful of being perceived as biased if they expressed racial solidarity with peers or characters of color. They were reluctant to actively participate in certain discussions, reluctance that reflected the fact that while students of color constitute the majority in the school, they are rarely acknowledged or listened to by those with social power. Students also noted instances of "stereotype threats" and were fearful of being perceived as saying something primarily in terms of racial allegiance. One Asian-American student noted that White students experienced the invisible burden of a fear of being misunderstood as racists. This student also noted that, given her outsider value stance, she had "learned how to read the other" [White students.] As she noted:

> I'm used to being in a group of all Asian people. I'll be hearing the same thing because we see things the same. But to see what a white person has to say about certain issues, like racism...to see that it really does exist is as hard for them to confront it as for me.

During her participation in the course, she learned to realize the power of inbred institutional forces of privilege, to the point that she believes that even though she may challenge whites in the discussion, that it is unlikely that they would change their racist value stances:

> If I was to talk about it, how it happens at the Mall, I'm sure lots of kids would argue with me. Like a lot, like the majority of the class because they are all white. I wouldn't want to see that it isn't worth arguing over. I know I'm right. I know it is wrong and I wouldn't want to argue over it. They just have to realize it for themselves. I think if I were to criticize the white people, they would be really offended, even if the issue was wrong, like racism.

However, these comments from students of color reflected isolated discussions within the course. Given the critical focus of the texts, the journal prompts, and the outside readings, Parks believed that the structure of the course represented a "decentering" of the White, male, middle-class as "normal." While occasional discussion topics or foci would bring discomfort to some students, students became accustomed to adopting a critical stance towards mainstream community and school discourses. He regularly rejected voicing a personal opinion that would negate uncomfortable statements of students, although it meant for occasionally difficult classes where students would leave uncertain or confused. Should one student appear particularly confused or offended by discussions that transpired in the classroom on a particular day, he would meet individually with students to address a student's need for clarity or affirmation.

In final focus-group discussions about the course, several of the students of color noted that they had acquired a sense of their own agency in coping with and confronting discourses of race portrayed in the literature by noting how Parks mediated conflicted attitudes towards race. They indicated that they had learned ways of challenging "race-talk" discourses (Bonilla-Silva, 2001) by citing instances of their own actual experiences of racism that contradicted White students' attempts to deny their culpability associated with racism, challenges frequently modeled by Parks.

Summary and Implications

Overtime, some students did change in their value stances related to discourses of race, class, and gender, particularly in terms of recognizing how racism, class attitudes, and sexism are constructed through language and discourses in both texts and their everyday lives (Bonilla-Silva, 2001). These students' shifts in value stances occurred gradually over time through engaging in challenges to their status-quo discourses of race, class, and gender from Parks and other students. All of this suggests the value of responding to multicultural literature as evoking competing discourse perspectives.

Students had difficulty critiquing characters' practices as shaped by institutional forces because they frequently framed characters' practices as matter of personal morality or a discourse of individualism and competition. However, there were instances in which they analyzed practices as constituted by institutional forces with some of the novels, for example, their critique of the justice system for Native Americans.

The results of this study point to the value of encouraging alternative, conflicting value stances in literature discussions as a means of challenging students' status quo discourses. It also suggests that high school students have difficulty interrogating institutional discourses constituting characters' practices, but that some begin to examine the constructed nature of their own value stances. These changes in value stances are unlikely to occur from only responding to multicultural literature alone, or only from discussion with diverse peers, or only in responding to challenges from a teacher or peer, but rather from a combination of all three factors.

The results of this study point to the central role assumed by the teacher in creating a classroom context that challenges students' status quo discourses in a productive manner through supporting ways of interrogating discourses, without adopting a didactic agenda to attempt to change students' value stances. It also suggests that changes in students' stances are most likely to occur from not only participating in discussion with diverse peers, but also in responding to challenges from a teacher or peer. It did surface the complex issue of instances in which students of color may experience a sense of exclusion when a teacher focuses on challenge White students' sense of privilege.

All of this suggests the need for further research on how students formulate value stances in response to multicultural literature in ways that challenge their peers' and the larger school's discourses (Kumashiro, 2002; Smith & Strickland, 2001; Vinz et al., 2000), as well as the teacher's role in assisting students in negotiating tensions between competing discourses and in providing support for and validation of their self-interrogation (Edelsky, Smith, & Wolfe, 2002; Samura, 1996; 2001).

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Appendix A

Interview Questions

In reference to a recent novel you have studied:

1. What was your reaction to the novel?
2. In reading the novel, what were some things about how it was written that made it easy to comprehend or understand? What were some things about how it was written that made it difficult to comprehend or understand?
3. How would you describe the cultural world or worlds portrayed in the novel? What were some things about the cultural world that were familiar or easy to understand? What were some of the things about the cultural world that were puzzling or difficult to understand?
4. What were some of the rules or norms as to appropriate behavior operating in the world of the novel? What are some specific things in the novel that suggest these rules or norms? What are some of the beliefs and attitudes operating in this world? What are some specific things in the novel that suggest these beliefs or attitudes?
5. How do you perceive the world of this novel as similar or different from the worlds of the other novels in this course? In what ways are they similar or different?
6. Did the characters, conflicts, situations, or resolutions portrayed in the novel remind you of any experiences in your own world? How are these experiences similar to or different from those portrayed in the novel?
7. What do you perceive to be some of the key issues or problems portrayed in the novel? What are some reasons why you may consider these issues or problems important to you?
8. In studying the novel, what were some classroom activities that were helpful for you in understanding the novel and why?
9. What are some reasons why other students may have been resistant to reading this novel? To what parts of this novel, if any, did you find yourself feeling resistance? How did your own response differ from other students' responses?
10. What were your favorite topics/issues to discuss in class in relation to the text? Which did you enjoy the least? Why?

Appendix B

Coding of School Culture Data

1. Control
    a. order
    b. cleanliness
    c. presence of authority
        i. professionalism of faculty
        ii. student/faculty relationships
    d. unspoken rules
    e. resistance
    f. values
    g. contrary examples
2. School spirit
    h. unity
    i. outliers
    j. traditions
    k. being "known" and "seen"
3. Segregated student groups
    a. white students
        i. white centrality
        ii. lack of awareness
    b. students of color
    c. family history
    d. female groups
    e. race
    f. contrary examples
4. Female identity
    a. rejecting norms
    b. sexualization
    c. contrary examples
5. Community pride
    a. traditions
    b. white centrality
        i. contrary examples
    c. parent support
    d. demographic shifts
    e. contrary examples
6. Culture of athleticism
    a. discipline
    b. identity formation
    c. physical display of competence
    d. contrary examples
7. Anti-intellectualism
    a. family and community values
    b. school values

c. contrary examples

8. Interviewees
   a. C.
   b. K.
   c. M.

Appendix C

Codes for Analysis of Classroom/Interview Data

1. participant

1.1 C
1.2 Kr
1.3 I
1.4 K
1.5 Ch
1.6 Ke

2. text (to also be used to determine time; note: we will focus on *Kindred* and *Love Medicine* as key texts, but also an early and late text for comparison of response over time).

2.1 *Mango Street*
2. 2. *Bless Me Ultima*
2. 3. *Their Eyes Were Watching God*
2. 4. *Kindred*
2. 5 *Love Medicine*
2. 6 *Obasan*
2. 7 *Smoke Signals*
2. 8. *Woman Warrior*
2. 9 *Bastard out of Carolina*
2. 10. *Yellow Raft in Blue Water*

3. teacher techniques (see Edelsky, Smith, and Wolfe, 2002)

3. 1. Modeling/demonstrating own responses/direct instruction ("tourguiding")
3. 1. 1. Critical lenses
3. 1. 2. Interpretative strategies ("go to the text," critical concepts, etc.)
3. 2. Framing discussion topics/eliciting student response
3. 3. Seeking clarification/challenging student response
3. 4. solidarity/support with students

4. Student discussion/positioning strategies

4.1 Challenging/disagreeing with other students/group
4.2 affirming others' stances/shared thinking
4.3 making connections to other texts, personal experiences, previous discussion
4.4 formulating lengthy, original interpretation
4.5 voices teacher words or actions or displays instructional strategies

5. Voicing/adopting stances/lenses/identity related to:

5. 1. gender
5. 2. class
5. 3. race
5. 4. sports/athletics
5. 5. school/education/socialization

5. 6. historical/cultural analysis in general
5. 7. psychological
5. 8. religious/spiritual

6. Contextualizing/constructing text worlds in terms of:

6. 1. norms, conventions, beliefs, values in the text

7. Categorizing/defines perceptions of self, others, and characters

7. 1. categorizes self or others or describes perceptions of self and other in terms of identity, role, ability, status, beliefs;

7. 2. categorizes or describes perceptions of characters in terms of identity, role, ability, status, beliefs

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